

Types of Counselling: Overview



Psychotherapy

What is psychotherapy?

Psychotherapy is a talk-based form of therapy that aims to help people improve their mental health and well-being ([College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario](#), n.d.). People usually “seek psychotherapy when they have thoughts, feelings, moods and behaviours that are adversely affecting their day-to-day lives, relationships and the ability to enjoy life” ([College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario](#), n.d.). Psychotherapy may also be referred to as counselling and can be delivered online, in-person or over the phone in both one-on-one and group settings.

Who are Psychotherapists & Who can be a Psychotherapist?

Psychotherapists are mental health professionals that use talk therapy and work to build a strong and stable therapeutic relationship to “bring about positive change for a client” ([Trillium Counselling, 2019](#)).

The term psychotherapist can only be used by regulated health professionals, but these health professionals may have different backgrounds and specialties. For example, the following can be psychotherapists:

- Social Workers (with a Master of Social Work) registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW)
- Someone with a Master of Psychology, Master of Counselling, Master of Education or graduated from a Psychotherapy Program who is registered with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario

- Psychologists registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario
- Nurses registered with the College of Nurses of Ontario
- Occupational Therapists registered with the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- Physicians registered with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

While all psychotherapists provide mental health counselling and therapy, only psychologists and psychiatrists can diagnose mental health conditions.

Psychotherapy at ORCC

Psychotherapists at the ORCC are Registered Social Workers with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW). Each mental health professional uses different techniques according to their practice and preference. When you first meet with a psychotherapist at the ORCC, they will discuss their suggested techniques with you and select option(s) according to your preference and goals.

Below are some of the evidence-based techniques used by ORCC’s counsellors in both individual and group therapy settings:

<p><u>Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)</u></p>	<p>Working with a therapist, you may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn to identify areas in your thinking that are inaccurate or overly negative• “See thoughts as ideas about what is going on, rather than as facts”• Take a step back from your thinking to consider different options and viewpoints <p>Main goal Help clients learn how to “make sense of what is happening around them and how these perceptions affect the way they feel.” (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, n.d.)</p>
<p><u>Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)</u></p>	<p>Working with a therapist, you may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn about trauma and PTSD• Develop tools to be “more aware of what you think and feel about your trauma and how you may be stuck in beliefs that are hurting you”• Learn how to challenge your thoughts and thinking• Consider how to balance your views and beliefs with those from before your trauma experience and those from after that experience <p>Main goal Help clients “confront...feared thoughts and memories associated with a traumatic event.” (Tull, 2021)</p>
<p><u>Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)</u></p>	<p>Working with a therapist, you may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop mindfulness skills (to help you focus on the present, or “live in the moment”• Improve distress tolerance skills (to help you accept yourself and your current situation)• Learn how to effectively engage in relationships (i.e., setting boundaries)• Learn how to navigate powerful feelings <p>Main goal To “teach people to live in the moment, develop healthy ways to cope with stress, regulate their emotions and improve their relationships with others.” (Schimelpfening, 2022)</p>

Psychotherapy at ORCC (continued)

<p><u>Narrative Therapy</u></p>	<p>Working with a therapist, you may hold a certain traumatic memory in your mind while tracking movement with your eyes.</p> <p>Main goal Help clients “heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that are the result of disturbing life experiences.” (EMDR Institute, Inc., n.d.)</p>
<p><u>Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)</u></p>	<p>Working with a therapist, you may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about trauma and PTSD • Develop tools to be “more aware of what you think and feel about your trauma and how you may be stuck in beliefs that are hurting you” • Learn how to challenge your thoughts and thinking • Consider how to balance your views and beliefs with those from before your trauma experience and those from after that experience <p>Main goal Help clients “confront...feared thoughts and memories associated with a traumatic event.” (Tull, 2021)</p>
<p><u>Brainspotting Therapy</u></p>	<p>What to expect Working with a therapist, your eyes will land on a place in the room that helps you focus on the feelings that are coming up; then you may process this experience and discuss what that might mean.</p> <p>Main goal Help a client process trauma (without having to relive it). (Blanchfield, 2022)</p>
<p><u>Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)</u></p>	<p>Working with a therapist, you may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to listen to the way you talk to yourself (self-talk) • Decide if a problem should be acted on immediately, and if not, what kind of behavioural changes could help the situation. <p>Main goal Help “clients learn to stop avoiding, denying and struggling with their inner emotions and, instead, accept that these deeper feelings are appropriate responses to certain situations that should not prevent them from moving forward in their lives.” (Psychology Today, 2022)</p>


Please note that multiple techniques can be used during one session and that there are other techniques a professional may offer.

Peer Support

“Peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common...The peer support worker provides emotional and social support to others who share a common experience.” (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2013; p. 7). Depending on each organization’s policies and procedures, Peer Support workers have usually undergone training to complement their role in addition to their lived experience. If they aren’t qualified (i.e., undergone Peer Support specific training), the peer support is more of an informal process.

People who connect with peer support workers often find it empowering to work with someone who has ‘been in their shoes.’ (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2013). While there is a Peer Support Worker Code of Conduct and provincial regulation over Peer Support Programs that all Peer Support Workers should follow, there is no regulatory body over Peer Support Workers.

Peer support is most often delivered through one-on-one supports or in group settings. According to the Canadian Medical Association (2020), the goals of peer support are to:



Help people discover and build on coping strategies that work for them

Promote a broader sense of community and a positive, supportive training and practice culture

Help people overcome challenges and manage wellness

Accompany clinical approaches

At this time, ORCC does not offer traditional peer support. If you are looking for this type of support, we recommend contacting the [Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa](#) and/or [Peer Support Programs with the Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#).

Deciding What Works Best for You

Taking steps to get professional help is not an easy one. Ultimately, it’s important that you feel comfortable and secure around the person (or people) you connect with for help. It may be a process to find a service provider that suits you and your goals but know that you are not alone and there are lots of people ready and willing to walk alongside you during your healing journey.